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Historical Sketch
of
ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH
of
Alexander County, North Carolina

Compiled
by
MISS DEWEY TEAGUE
1941
Taylorsville, North Carolina

“Upon This Rock I Will Build My Church; And The
Gates Of Hell Shall Not Prevail Against It”.—Matt. 16:18.

The beginning of Antioch Baptist Church incorporates a very striking account of what was known as the "New Meeting House Baptist Church" which Dr. W. R. Paschal of Wake Forest, in his history of North Carolina Baptist says, was the oldest Baptist church in the State west of Salisbury. It was located two miles east of Antioch Baptist church at what is now known as the Munday Graveyard, on No. 127 State Highway leading from Taylorsville to Hickory. From an account given by W. E. White and the old records, it was organized June 7, 1797 under the leadership of elders Edward Teague, Benjamin Austin and Henry Holtsclaw. Edward Teague became the first pastor and continued as such, until his death in 1810. Here is a copy of the record of the organization:

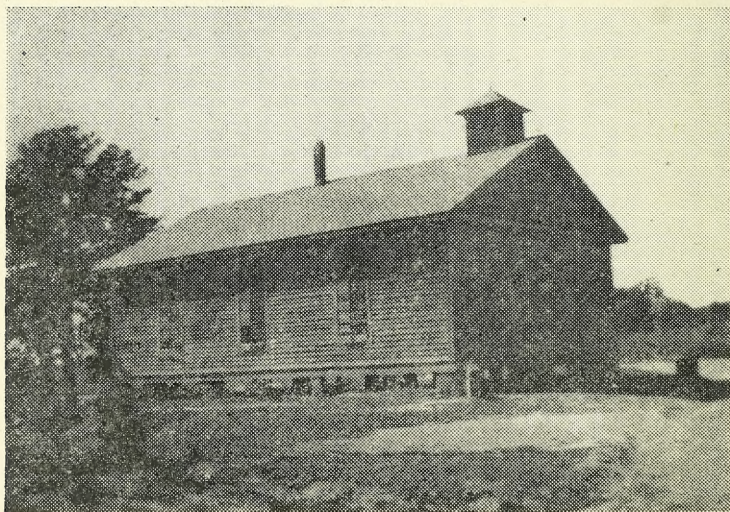
"On June 7, 1797 at a meeting held at the New Meeting House in Burke County, Middle Little River, a presbytery being called for, to constitute a church and ordain officers, and found prepared the members names as follows: Edward Teague, Benjamin Austin, Henry Holtsclaw, elders, and Wm. Sherrill, and Nathan Austin (deacons)." The following pastors and deacons served this church: Edward Teague and Benjamin Austin, pastors; Wm. Sherrill and Nathan Austin deacons. Charter members are as follows: George Payne, George Thompson, Jehu Barnes, James Oxford, Sarah Teague, Mary Austin, Rebecca Austin, Elizabeth Thompson, Nancy Payne, Rebecca Foster, Ruth Pressley, Elender Dockery, Tabitha Spradling, Elijah Austin, Harry, (a negro), Lurana Barnes, Mary Austin, Sr. Then one year later, February 28, 1798 on the reverse side of the document in a different handwriting was written: Richard Barnes, Elijah Austin, (dismissed by letter about October 1, of the same year) and Mary Austin.

This church building was a log structure and served practically all of the people of this section of the country in those pioneer days as a meeting house for worship, for more than a quarter of a century; when it was destroyed by fire, purportedly by the hand of man in 1825. The house of worship was never rebuilt on that site.

This church was the out growth of seed scattered from the battle of Alamance by Governor Tryon's muskets. Edward Teague came from Orange County, North Carolina and settled in this section, one mile west of Barretts Mountain. He was born in 1720 and died in 1810. He and his wife Sarah

Historical Sketch of Antioch Baptist Church

**Served As A Place Of Community Worship For
More Than Three Score Years**



**Erected 1875
OLD ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH**

are buried in the cemetery near where the New Meeting House stood. George Payne, Jehu Barnes and probably Henry Holtsclaw came from Orange County. James Oxford, Wm Sherrill and a negro Harry, were born near the Catawba River and lived in what is now Caldwell County. The charter members of the New Meeting House Baptist Church were once prior to this probably members of the Old Sandy Creek Baptist Church in Orange County.

There was some difference of opinion on the part of some of the members as to the advisability of rebuilding on the old site. Some who lived on the East side wanted to build a new building further East and those living on the West side wanted to go further West with it. And it came to pass on Saturday July 29, 1826, one year after the New Meeting House was burned that a presbytery consisting of ministers and deacons from this and other nearby Baptist churches, Wm. Dodson, Sr., Wm Dodson, Jr., Wm Hines, Richard Wallace, John Swaim, and Alexander West, met (it is not known just where, but probably somewhere in what is now known as the Antioch community) for the purpose of organizing a new church. The brethren and sisters were found to be orthodox and a Baptist church was organized and was given the name of Antioch Baptist Church. The name Antioch was brought from a church in Orange County. This church gradually absorbed most of the members of the New Meeting House Church. Some joined Little River and other churches nearby.

Those becoming Charter members are as follows: Rachel Brown, Mary Austin Sr., Sarah Teague Nancy Payne, Rebecca Austin, Elender Dockery, Nathan Austin, and Benjamin Austin. These and probably some others were charter members who came from the New Meeting House Baptist Church. William Dodson, Sr., became the first pastor of this church. The following are the names of the pastors, deacons, clerks and trustees, who served the church for the first fifty years from 1826 to 1876:

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Pastors:

William Dodson, Sr.	July 1826 to 1830
William Richard and J. F. McCall	April 1830 to 1832
William Richards	August 1832 to 1835
William D. Holder	June 1835 to 1847
William Goforth	May 1847 to 1848
R. L. Steele & J. H. West	April 1848 to 1851
Jas. Reed and William Poole	January 1851 to 1853
George Swaim	May 1853 to 1854
Huston Holtsclaw	June 1854 to 1855
Huston Holsclaw & Geo. Swaim	December 1855 to 1858
Geo. Swaim and Daniel Austin	April 1858 to 1859
J. B. Powell and Daniel Austin	May 1859 to 1862
Jacob Crouch	December 1862 to 1868
William Poole and D. B. Brown	January 1868 to 1870
Smith Ferguson	February 1870 to 1871
C. C. Poole	November 1871 to 1875
G. D. Sherrill	August 1875 to 1876

Deacons:

It is not certain but in all probability Nathan Austin and William Sherrill served as deacons for the first few years and at some later date not given the names of Elijah Teague (Drummer Teague), Pickens Austin, and J. C. Caldwell occur.

Trustees:

Merritt Austin, and Daniel Austin

Clerks:

Benjamin Austin, Christian Baker, James Reed, Robert H. Teague, Henry M. Julian, W. S. Poole, Henry M. Julian, R. W. Munday, and S. P. Austin.

The supposition is very strongly substantiated that a house of worship was not built until after the organization in 1826, the brethren made plans to build a house of worship. The site selected and decided upon was the site on which the present frame building now stands. The plan was a log structure, there being in those days good native heart pine with which to build. The building was large enough and high enough for a gallery with entrance by stairs on the inside. (The gallery was built more especially for colored people in those days.) William White Sr., hewed the logs with which the building was erected. The front door was on the east side of the building facing the old Lovelady road leading from Morganton to Statesville. The house was probably lighted with tallow candles.

Historical Sketch of Antioch Baptist Church

Along with this church building they erected a brush arbor for more comfort and convenience during the warm weather seasons. Here is a description given by R. S. Austin as to how they lighted the brush arbor:,,

“They built a scaffold about square with forked stakes and placed poles on top of it very close together and then patted dirt on top of the poles. Then they built a pine knot fire on top of it to furnish light for the services at night. They used a tallow candle on the pulpit and straw on the ground. They built about four such scaffolds to give sufficient light.

The first minister ordained by this church was James Reed. He was ordained in the old log house the first Saturday in October 1849 and became pastor of the church in 1851. It is a matter of tradition that William Dodson Sr., preached the first sermon in the old log building.

In the year 1871 William Austin entered a tract of land around and near what is now Antioch Baptist church. Then in 1852 Nathan Austin, the youngest son of William Austin, deeded to the trustees of Antioch Baptist church Merritt Austin and Daniel Austin and their successors, five acres of wooded land surrounding Antioch church building. From the wording of the deed it is evident that the land was purchased before the house was built. The price paid for the land was twenty-dollars. Since then the church has acquired by donation and purchase about five acres more, making a total of about ten acres that the church now owns.

In the year 1875 several of the leading members of the church considered a log building church as antiquated and that more room for the congregation was necessary, and they decided to build a frame building. They went into the woods and cut logs and hauled them to an old upright sawmill run by water, at the Lige Reed Mill place, had the lumber sawed and dressed it by hand. The old log building was then torn down and sold to E. C. Oxford for fifteen dollars. The new building was built on the same site. This building was built by and under the direction of Pinkney Killian. It was a one room auditorium 45 by 30 feet, with a seating capacity of about 250 people. It had two doors in the front facing the north, three large windows on each side and two smaller windows back of the pulpit. It also had a belfry on the top of the building near the front with a bell bought by the church. This building was lighted with oil lamps until recently an

Historical Sketch of Antioch Baptist Church

electric lighting system was installed.

During the pastorate of J. L. Teague a committee consisting of G. C. Teague and Roy Munday together with the deacons were appointed to raise money to recover the church building. The money was raised and the old shingle roof was replaced with an asphalt roof July 15, 16, 1929.

There is no exact date given but as nearly as can be determined from the church records, the first service in this frame building was on Saturday May 4, 1876. In this minute is given the first mention of any Sunday School being organized. Brethern John Munday and W. E. White were appointed superintendents, and Moses A. Teague was appointed assistant superintendent. Brother W. E. White was appointed treasurer of the Sunday School and they were to have special music in connection with the Sunday School. As the congregations grew larger for the summer services they deemed it necessary to build a larger arbor for warm weather services. Plans were made and they built a frame arbor 80 by 100 feet which would seat approximately one thousand people. It had four entrances and the seats were made by rolling logs in place and laying planks across them. The pulpit was about eight feet square and four feet high, boxed up on the sides and rear, with a broad plank across the front for a pulpit desk. The pulpit was on the north side of the arbor. In 1934 the old arbor was sold to E. P. Keller for \$5.50 and was torn down and moved away. The arbor stood on the same site where the new stone building now stands.

Antioch Baptist church has belonged to the following associations: Briar Creek, Catawba, Lewis Fork, Brushy Mountain and Alexander. The Alexander Association has met with this church three different times, first in 1888, 1905 and in 1926 which marked the one hundredth anniversary of the church.

During these long years this church has sent out a number of ministers to proclaim the gospel and to carry the good news of salvation to the hearts of men and women far and near. During the time of the old frame building from 1876 to 1941, a period of 65 years, this church has licensed and ordained the following brethern: O. A. Keller, J. U. Teague, R. C. Cline, L. W. Teague, B. F. Austin, G. C. Teague, E. C. Keller, C. W. Teague, Jack Keller, Luther Hollar. Charlie Sigmon was the first one to go out from the community during this period but was not ordained by the church. Following is the list of pastors serving the church during this period of 65 years:

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W. T. Davis	May 1876 to July 1876
Wm Poole and J. B. Poole	July 1876 to June 1879
L. P. Gwaltney	January 1879 to September 1879
J. B. Powell	September 1879 to August 1880
L. P. Gwaltney	August 1880 to November 1882
W. A. Poole	November 1882 to January 1885
L. P. Gwaltney	January 1885 to August 1885
J. B. Poole	August 1885 to October 1885
H. D. LeQueue	October 1885 to August 1886
L. P. Gwaltney	August 1886 to 1889
D. W. Poole	1889 to 1893
J. M. Shaver	1893 to 1913
G. Z. Bumgarner	1913 to 1916
D. W. Poole	1916 to 1921
W. J. Bumgarner	1921 to 1926
T. E. Payne	1926 to 1928
J. L. Teague	January 1928 to 1933
G. C. Teague	January 1933 to 1941
S. A. Stroup (present pastor)	April 1941.

Deacons who have served from 1876 to 1941 are as follows: Elijah Teague, Drummer Teague, J. C. Caldwell, Pickens Austin, W. E. White, R. L. Downs, R. S. Austin, Geo. Reid, W. N. Montgomery, Willie Montgomery, Oscar Poole, W. O. Bowman, H. B. Oxford, W. A. Hollar, V. W. Teague, W. J. Caldwell, A. C. Cline, Clarence Keller, R. A. Little, W. E. Hollar, Willard Benfield, Jay Hollar, Charie Austin, John Teague, O. E. Teague.

Clerks serving from 1876 to 1941 are as follows: S. P. Austin, W. E. White, J. F. Moore, R. S. Austin, W. O. Bowman, R. L. Downs, Vance W. Teague, Warren Hollar, W. R. Austin.

Present officers of the church are as follows:

Pastor: S. A. Stroup.

Deacons: R. S. Austin, Willard Benfield, O. E. Teague, John Fox, John Teague, Jay Hollar, Charlie Austin.

Clerk: V. W. Teague.

Treasurer: Earl Cline

Trustees: John Fox, Willard Benfield, John Teague.

Sunday School Superintendent: W. R. Austin.

Pianist: Mrs. Carris Austin.

The present enrollment of church membership 343.

The church adopted the weekly budget plan and the average amount raised weekly \$30.00.

Historical Sketch of Antioch Baptist Church

This church has made slow but steady progress during all its long life of one hundred and fifteen years. Much of the work done in its early beginning was pioneer work, and those who led in those days were truly pioneers of the old faith.

This church has the distinguished honor of having as its pastor at four different times one of the greatest preachers this country has yet produced; the Reverend L. P. Gwaltney. It is to be observed however, that he did not serve the church long at a time. The only reason that may be assigned is; perhaps the people then as now, failed to recognize and appreciate what they had until it was too late. Reverend J. M. Shaver has the honor of serving the church as pastor longer than any other man, from 1893 to 1913. During this time the church made greater progress and was in a higher state of spiritual development than at any other period of its former history. As an evidence of this spiritual growth during this period, seven or eight young men surrendered to the call of the gospel ministry and were sent out by this church to preach the gospel. Others went out to be teachers and religious leaders. This church has throughout all its history prior to 1928 held to the old custom of having services on Saturday and Sunday once a month. The roll of the church was usually called on Saturday and every member was expected to be there unless providentially hindered, to answer to his name. It was the custom too, in those days to withdraw fellowship from all disorderly members. This custom of calling the roll was done away with long before the Saturday meetings were discontinued. W. E. White served as Superintendent of the Sunday School for about thirty years and was recognized as the most outstanding leader in the church and community in his day.

Reverend J. L. Teague came to the pastorate of the church in 1928. At that time the church promised to raise \$250.00 per year for pastor's salary, and was aided by the State Mission Board with a similar amount. (This was the first and only time the church ever received aid from the State Mission Board.) The Saturday meetings were discontinued and the church went to two Sunday mornings a month. Brother Teague served as pastor for four years. This period might be

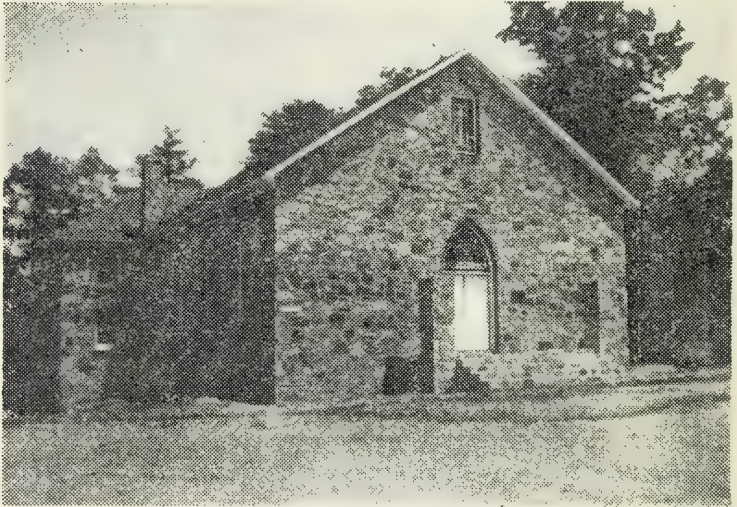
Historical Sketch of Antioch Baptist Church

spoken of as a period of constructive work during which time the foundation was laid for further development and growth. And then on the fourth Sunday in January 1933 Reverend G. C. Teague was called as pastor, and served until the last Sunday in February 1941, a period of eight years. The time of the services was changed from morning to afternoon twice a month. The progress during this period was slow at first, but after a year or so, with the interest manifested upon the part of the rising generation and leaders of the church a sentiment began to develop for a more modern and adequate church plant. In 1936 some efforts were made on the part of the church toward a new building but without success. Then for about two years due to some misunderstandings and contentions on the part of some, both within and without the church, over the new building program, it went through, perhaps one of the most trying and perplexing periods in the history of the church.

In 1937 a building and finance committee were elected by the church consisting of: Building Committee: R. S. Austin George Reed, J. A. Cline, Vance W. Taegue, and Willard Benfield. Finance Committee: W. R. Austin, Chairman, Willard Benfield, R. A. Little, Vance W. Teague, A. V. Teague, John Teague, Earl Cline, Mrs. Earl Cline, Mrs. V. W. Teague, W. J. Caldwell, Elisha Hollar, O. E. Teague, Woodrow Austin, Dorothy Cline, Estelle Teague, together with G. C. Teague, pastor general director and supervisor of the building program.

The building committee was instructed to work out plans for a new church building, to select a building site and decide on the kind of material to be used. (Sometime later R. A. Little was elected to take the place of J. A. Cline, deceased). He was also selected as carpenter foreman and asked by the committee to assist the pastor in working out the plans and supervising the building. After due consideration a report was made to the church by R. A. Little and the pastor upon the part of the committee, concerning plans for a new building. The report was accepted and the committee was instructed by the church to proceed with the plan. The

**THIS NEW MODERN CHURCH BUILT FROM NATIVE
STONE, HAS LARGE SUNDAY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**



NEW ANTIOCH—(Unfinished)

This new building is of stone veneer. The auditorium is 36x56, with four windows on each side, double front door of gothic design, and front porch. A baptistry was placed back of the pulpit. A three-story Sunday School Department 25x56 adjoining the auditorium, providing space for about twenty class rooms.

plan called for a stone veneer building with an auditorium 56 by 36 feet, with four windows on each side and a double door in front with gothic designs, a front porch with two or more columns with bell tower and steeple on top of building, a baptistry back of the pulpit together with a three story Sunday School plant 56 by 25 feet, providing space for twenty or more class rooms. This is to be built on the site where the old arbor stood. The plan further called for a "pay as you go basis". The committee then made plans to begin work and during the years of 1938, '39, '40 and '41 the most significant building program of the church's history got under way in earnest, and on September 5, 1938, the pastor and a group of members met to break ground and begin the first days work on the new building. (Some timber had been cut on the church grounds prior to this) The excavating and foundation work was done at intervals by the members of the church. Then on Monday morning July 10, 1939, the pastor, G. C. Teague with twenty-five or more members met to begin the first day's mason work on the building. The rock masons were J. H. Winkler, Bill and Earl Evans. The rock used in the erection of the building came in the main from the farm of Garland White, and other places in the nearby community. The only cost of the rock was eighty cents per yard paid to Charlie Hand for hauling them. Cicero Echerd was employed to supervise the framing of the building. The most of the lumber that was used in the building was cut from the grounds of the church. Some was furnished by members and friends of the church. T. G. Teague, Frank Downs, Willie Austin and others not members gave timber for frame work. Many of the former members and friends of the church gave donations to the building fund. Wilkie Bowman of Hickory a former member, raised the money with which to buy the roof. Rev. B. F. Austin gave a beautiful set of light fixtures, for the auditorium. There are others, who with a profound interest in the church and its success, have played a great part in this new movement. Wayne Austin, the progressive and energetic Sunday School Superintendent and financial chairman; Ralph Little the carpenter foreman. Ray Hollar (deceased), J. A. Cline (deceased), R. S. Austin, A. V. Teague, George Reed, and many others whose names we cannot mention for lack of space. Jay Hollar led in a weekly prayer meeting during this building program which was one of the

outstanding feature of it. The fine spirit of fellowship and cooperation upon the part of the present membership was another very important factor in the program. They all, by faith and by God's help and direction, built the house.

When the pastor resigned the second Sunday in March 1941 the treasurer reported all bills paid in full. The amount of money spent on the building up to that time was around \$1500.00. During this building enterprise the church has experienced perhaps the greatest period of financial and spiritual progress in the history of the church. In the summer of 1939 the church had, with possibly one exception, its greatest revival, when forty-eight were baptized into the fellowship of the church, and five joined by letter.

Brother Teague led the church to realize and see its strength and possibilities and left it with a desire to reach outward, upward and onward. He resigned on the second Sunday in March 1941, effective the fifth Sunday of that same month, to accept a call to the First Baptist church of Sylva, N. C., at which time the church called S. A. Stroup of Granite Falls as pastor. On the Second Sunday in April 1941 he accepted the call and began his work. He led the church in the completion of the new auditorium. One thousand dollars was borrowed from the Building and Loan at Taylorsville with which to do it. The amount spent on the building up to the time of the first service held in it was about twenty-five hundred dollars. They continued holding services in the old building until August 10, 1941, when they met in it for the last service. The pastor used as his text that day Matt. 5:3. (A copy of the program of the last service in the old building will be on file of the church records.)

Then on August 17, 1941 the church met for the first service in the new auditorium. Approximately one thousand people, members, former members and friends of the church came together for this service. Reverend G. C. Teague, the former pastor was invited back to preach the first sermon. His text was in Matt. 16:18 and Matt. 28:19-20; his subject was "Antioch Baptist Church and its Missions". (A copy of this sermon is being placed on file of the church records.) Following the sermon an offering was taken which amounted to about two hundred dollars. A bountiful and delicious dinner was then enjoyed by every one present. The afternoon service consisted of special music by Claude Hollar and his children, short talks by the pastor, former pastors, and mem-

Historical Sketch of Antioch Baptist Church

bers and friends of the church. J. M. Shaver, J. L. Teague, B. B. Austin, A. C. Payne, M. A. Mackie and C. E. Echerd. This Homecoming Day was followed with a revival meeting, and Rev. J. U. Teague of Henderson, N. C., a former member and one of the first preachers to be sent out by the church, was invited to do the preaching. The meeting resulted in the addition of sixteen by baptism and a spiritual uplift to the church and community.

It may truthfully be said that Antioch Baptist church has been as a city set upon a hill, and that her light cannot be hid. The half has not been told concerning the work of this church during the past 115 years of its existence, but enough has been told to reveal the fact that it is one of the churches that Jesus built. (Matt. 16:18, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.")

This last thought I would like to leave with you—Do not throw this little book around and allow it to get destroyed. It will be very helpful some day; so take care of it and hand it down to those who are to follow us.

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